

## ***Timing is Everything***

It was one of those occasions that arrested my attention. Though it was a momentary crossing of two paths, it spoke volumes. We were above an elevation of 9000' in the Colorado Rockies in a relatively remote campsite. While riding Spark on a dirt road bridleless, I was on route to the camp headquarters carrying my laptop in one hand, so I could connect with the internet services, and a cup of gourmet coffee in the other hand (My friends call that 'cowboy swell'). My very own presence was a study in contrast. However, in addition to the picture I presented, there came a man on a bicycle, seemingly out for healthy wholesome exercise, yet, attached to his ear was his right hand holding a cell phone. We passed without a word, yet the experience provoked my thinking about changing times.

Living in the context of overwhelming change can be very threatening. Certainly, today's world of technological changes, political unrest, global wars, terrorists, economic uncertainty, and relational fragmentation has a bearing on one's health. However, the key to dealing with change is to know two things. First is to know what is unchangeable, and second is knowing the purpose of change. I was asked to do some training with the mounted police dept. of Minneapolis/ St. Paul, MN to help prepare them to host the Republican national convention of 2008. While many trainers would recommend exposing the horse to many de-spooking elements, noise, flapping tarps, etc., it was my emphasis to get the horse's attention on the rider who was unchanging. Stabilizing a horse is more about keeping him focused in an environment that is extremely distracting. In other words, if we cannot control the outside, it is imperative that we stabilize the inside.

The scriptures speak of God's Son coming forth in the fullness of time. Paul speaks of his time for life as one born untimely. It is as if he was born out of time to have been actually chosen to be one of the twelve Disciples of Christ. The life of Christ itself seems to have come to the forefront in one of the most chaotic and unstable times in Middle East history. Even the church itself had become sidetracked. The scribes and Pharisees had become rigid, legalistic and intolerant in their view. The Sadducees had become liberal, giving up in the hope of resurrection at all. The Herodians had become politically correct doing that which would assure their survival under an oppressive Roman government, not unlike our day and age. It was a day when terrorists ruled, like King Herod who would literally murder anyone who even appeared to be a threat. It was a time when Roman crucifixion became excessive and out of control. Also a time when men fled to the hills for spiritual survival like the Essenes from which John the Baptist came.

No matter the appearance, neither Jesus nor the apostle Paul were untimely in their birth and life. According to the scriptures, and the character of God, they were right on time. Matt 1:17 tells us that there were precisely fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to deportation to Babylon, and exactly fourteen generations from exile to Babylon to the birth of Jesus. In the fullness of time God brought forth His son. It was an era of religious platitudes and misdirected zeal, a time when people looked for deliverance from an oppressive Roman government, a time when the Romans themselves would build roads that would allow men and women to take the gospel around the world, a time when the Greek language was the prominent language of the day, providing the most exacting preservation for God's word, a time when a government census required a very pregnant young couple to go to Bethlehem thus fulfilling the prophecies of God, a time when a long forgotten couple would conceive and give birth to a boy named John, who would be the

spokesman and forerunner of the King of Kings, a time when the Passover just happened to take place at the time of the crucifixion, a time when the solar and stellar systems pointed wise men to the very feet of Jesus, a time in history when the Jewish Temple would stand to represent the presence of God, only to be destroyed soon after the crucifixion of Christ, all happening in the fullness of time.

In the horse world, timing is everything. Executing a reining pattern or dressage performance requires that one get their timing down. Precise movements are the result of timely communication and confidence in the unchanging commands of the trainer that empowers the animal to hear, adjust and make changes in an ever changing environment. Why is this such a critical issue? Because the devil is also about timing; he is about taking good things that God creates out of God's timing. It is surely God's desire to bless and minister to the needs of His creation. It is also the devil's intent to cause us to doubt the goodness of God or the timing of God and therefore act on our own behalf and in our own wisdom. It is the horse trying to perform on his own, delaying a step or rushing ahead that causes performance to falter.

In a world of rapid change, our source of stability and perspective is unchanging as our eyes are fixed completely on the unchanging character and commands of His calling. This results in what the Bible calls the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord. This is what keeps us from being tossed to and fro by the influence of our culture. We will not worry because things do not happen in our timing or according to the pressures of modern culture. However, because we were chosen for this time in history, we can also look for the opportunity in which the unchanging message of the gospel can be proclaimed, in a relevant way. The use of technologies and communication styles must be seriously considered in attempts to build bridges to the hearts of the lost.

Indeed we are not a people untimely born. We are people born and prepared for this very occasion, just as Mordecai had suggested to Esther. It's a time when our world is looking and searching for answers and examining that which is genuine from that which is artificial. It is a time when society is rushing headlong into sensual indulgence yet hoping all the time for an alternative. Behold, today is the day of salvation; timing really is everything.

Just as in the days of Christ when the world stage was being prepared for the entrance of a new kingdom, so too is our world heading for a new world order. The stage is set both for those who are looking for the blessed hope of the coming Christ, or for an anti-Christ who will tell us the lies we wish to believe.